

Amendments to the Claims

Please replace claims 16-33 with the following amended claims 16-35:

16. (*Previously presented*) A paper strip dispensing apparatus comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a drum mounted for rotation in the housing, the drum having at least one groove and the at least one groove having a width;
 - a shaft mounted in the housing adjacent the drum, the shaft mounted for rotation, the shaft having a first outer diameter and a central section having a second outer diameter less than the first outer diameter, and the central section having a length greater than the width of the at least one groove of the drum; and
 - at least one belt mounted on the drum and the shaft, the belt mounted in the at least one groove of the drum and in the central section of the shaft; wherein the length of the central section of the shaft allows the at least one belt to deflect laterally over an amplitude (a) when a paper strip is pulled laterally from the paper strip dispensing apparatus.
17. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the drum comprises an axis of rotation and the shaft comprises an axis of rotation, and wherein the axis of rotation of the shaft is substantially parallel to the axis of rotation of the drum.
18. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the central section comprises shoulders, the shoulders adapted to prevent the lateral movement of the at least one belt beyond the central section.

19. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 17, wherein the central section comprises shoulders, the shoulders adapted to prevent the lateral movement of the at least one belt beyond the central section.

20. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the at least one belt consists of a belt.

21. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the paper strip comprises one of a hand-wipe and toilet paper.

22. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the housing is a wall-mounted housing.

23. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the drum further comprises a strip-cutting mechanism.

24. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the drum comprises a hollow drum.

25. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 24, wherein the hollow drum further comprises a strip-cutting mechanism.

26. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the central section comprises a dolly axle.

27. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the at least one belt is mounted between the drum and the shaft to permit lateral deflection of the belt when the paper strip is dispensed from the apparatus.

28. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, further comprising a reel mounted to the housing for holding paper strip mounted in the housing.

29. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the housing comprises an opening for dispensing the paper strip, and wherein the shaft at least partially obstructs the opening.

30. (*Currently amended*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the central section comprises a smooth, curvilinear surface extending in a longitudinal direction over which the at least one belt laterally deflects.

31. (*Previously presented*) A paper strip dispensing apparatus comprising:

a housing;

a drum mounted for rotation in the housing, the drum having at least one groove and the at least one groove having a width; and

a control and safety device comprising:

a shaft mounted in the housing adjacent the drum, the shaft mounted for rotation, the shaft having a first outer diameter and a central section having a second outer diameter less than the first outer diameter, and the central section having a length greater than the width of the at least one groove of the drum; and

at least one belt mounted on the drum and the shaft, the belt

mounted in the at least one groove of the drum and in the central section of the shaft;

wherein the length of the central section of the shaft allows the at least one belt to deflect laterally over an amplitude (α) when a paper strip is pulled laterally from the paper strip dispensing apparatus.

32. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 31, wherein the drum comprises an axis of rotation and the shaft comprises an axis of rotation, and wherein the axis of rotation of the shaft is substantially parallel to the axis of rotation of the drum.

33. (*Previously presented*) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 31, wherein the drum further comprises a strip-cutting mechanism.

34. (*New*) A paper strip dispensing apparatus comprising:
a housing;
a drum mounted for rotation in the housing, the drum having an axis and at least one groove and the at least one groove having a width;
a shaft mounted in the housing adjacent the drum, the shaft mounted for rotation, the shaft having an axis substantially parallel to the axis of the drum, a first outer diameter, and a central section having a second outer diameter less than the first outer diameter, and the central section having a length greater than the width of the at least one groove of the drum and wherein the central section comprises a smooth, curvilinear surface extending in a longitudinal direction; and
at least one belt mounted on the drum and the shaft, the belt mounted in the at least one groove of the drum and in the central section of the shaft;
wherein the length of the central section of the shaft allows the at least one belt to deflect laterally over an amplitude (α) when a paper strip is pulled laterally from the paper strip dispensing apparatus.

35. (**New**) The paper strip dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 34,
wherein the smooth, curvilinear surface is radiused in the longitudinal direction.